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## GÖTHE'S SOCIAL ROMANCES.

Translated from the German of Karl Rosenkranz by THOS. DAVIDSON.

### THE JOURNEYMANSHIP.

In the *Elective Affinities*, everything warns us to give good heed to the smallest, as well as to the greatest matters in the domain of ethics. A look, a pressure of the hand, a word, a kiss, a sigh, a yea, a nay, a remaining or going—everything, in short, is shown to be fraught with incalculable possible consequences. Everything warns us to give implicit obedience to reason, freedom, God, unless we are willing, by fastidious, eudemonic irrationality to involve ourselves in a fate, and weave the fatalistic net, which shall at last completely and hopelessly entangle us. Altogether different is the *Journeyman-ship*. It conducts us into the labyrinthine, wide, wide world, and lays bear to us the treasures which it conceals, to enable us to rise above our fate. Here we see things the most distant come together, things in closest proximity part asunder, a way open out of the most desperate positions, and the power which the spirit has of maintaining itself in contradiction, work its unfathomable miracles. The *Journeyman-ship*, as Göthe himself has remarked, is not all of one piece, but is certainly all of one purpose. It has neither the progressive gradation of the *Apprenticeship*, nor the novel-like, rounded plan of the *Elective Affinities*. It is a real epic, unfolding before us the infinity of historic *Becoming*: making incident grow out of incident, and event cross event, breaking off the thread, taking it up again, bringing persons together with persons, and still combining into internal union the whole of this medley, through the higher intention which is ever directed to the conquest over Fate. No wonder if the author, in view of the superabundance of the multifarious, pressing matter which he has to handle, makes himself out as merely the editor of papers committed to his charge. "Editor" here means nothing more than Rhapsode.

In the *Journeyman-ship* we find at once two distinct masses. The one is that of the novelettes, the other the pædagogical. The former contains a series of ethical collisions, e. g. *The foolish Pilgrim*, *The Nut-brown Maid*, *Not too far*, *The dangerous Bet*, *Who is the Traitor?* *The Man of fifty years*, &c.

They bear, in general, the coloring of the *Elective Affinities*, only with this difference, that their termination does not fall into the tragic, but solves the collision serenely either by abnegation or travel. The pædagogical side of the romance has been designated by Goethe himself as Utopian. It has given great offence to æsthetic exquisites, by affording almost no food for their romantic cravings and habits, but rather setting them to reflect earnestly upon the most important of concerns. It is incredible how prone man is to recognize only that which he already knows. One cannot, after all, but rejoice that Goethe in his educational views departs from the ordinary grounds taken; nevertheless, it is precisely his novelty that has been taken most serious exception to. And inasmuch as he modestly presents his educational maxims and institutions simply as problems, this fact has been at once set down as a self-condemnation. But how far we have learnt in recent times to look upon works which were once decried as Utopias, as thoughtful anticipations of the future; for example, Plato's *Republic*, Campanella's *Civitas Solis*, More's *Utopia*, Morelly's *Basiliade*, Mercier's *Year 2240*, and so forth! Goethe's *Journeymanship* has its place among Social Romances. It sets aside the formalism of diplomatic politics, which costs nations so much time and money, and tries to show how much individuals can do for the happiness and moral improvement of men, in free association based upon the principle of individuality. All religions and forms of government are to be respected. People must not assume a revolutionary attitude towards them, but rather apply their powers to positive improvements. Morality must be regarded with strictness, but without pedantry.

The foundation of the social structure he considers to be the family organization, the summit, the free world-association of operatives. Carl Grün, in the work to which we have already several times referred, asserts that Goethe, in the *Journeymanship*, considers the family to be a yoke of slavery which the progressive spirit must throw off. He, therefore, appeals to the old uncle who represents Americanism, and, with his peculiar humor, pictures the inconvenience of a distracted and, of course, slow family table, that inexorably collects around it always the same persons at the same hours.

The uncle, for this reason, has introduced into his family the fashion of dining *à la carte*. Now, is it true, that this manifestly one-sided view of the family table is necessarily such as would destroy family-life? This excellent old gentleman is also anxious that the women and children may enjoy everywhere and at cheap rates the fruit of which they are so fond, and has therefore made arrangements with female carriers who bring cherries, apples, plums and pears out into the smallest valleys among the mountains. He is also greatly interested in the cultivation of turnips and cabbages, as an offset against the unhealthy use of potatoes. How practical this is has been shown of late years, since the failure of this one product has placed the subsistence of millions of human beings in a critical position—an unequivocal proof that we ought to cultivate a greater variety of fruits, and this altogether apart from the fact that man, being omnivorous, must, by absolute uniformity of food, approximate to the lower animals, which are frequently incapable of eating more than one kind of food. But now, how absurd would be the conclusion that Goethe would not have potatoes cultivated at all! And so, within the family, he desires, it is true, in all indifferent things the greatest possible amount of liberty for the individual; but upon marriage and upon the family he does insist. How carefully, in the *Journeymanship*, are the preparations for a marriage contract carried on—how plainly do even Philina and Frederick, Lucy and Montan, and so on, everywhere do homage to the principle of the family—a principle which in Macaria assumes an almost sublime personal expression! It is particularly worthy of note that Goethe has placed at the very beginning the charming story of Joseph and Mary, that exquisite family idyl which reminds us that, throughout Christendom, the family, woman, and labor, are sacred—the Redeemer of the world himself having been born of a woman, having sprung from the bosom of a carpenter's family. Even in the *Elective Affinities* Goethe takes care to give prominence to building, as that which, more than anything else, distinguishes man from the lower animals, which, at best, make themselves nests.

Education must lead to thoughtfulness. Goethe presents this under the form of the closest attention paid to time, which, according to him, is far too little valued by most

men, although it is our most precious possession. Each moment comes but once. If it is not bought up, it is lost forever. Goethe, therefore, insists upon the greatest possible multiplication of chronometric instruments, in order that the value of time may ever be present before our eyes. Then we must accustom ourselves to moderation in that which is arbitrary, and assiduity in that which is necessary. But the *sine qua non* for labor is, that we bring ourselves to perfection in some branch of knowledge, and in some faculty, so that we may venture with confidence to affirm that we understand something thoroughly. Such perfection in any one art or science is a guarantee of the possibility of arriving at perfection in other branches also. In that one we learn to understand all; it becomes to us implicitly the likeness of the rest. Without this one-sidedness we cannot arrive at many-sidedness, far less at harmony: inasmuch as without it we lack the consciousness of true solidity, of an objective faculty.

All persons are brought up through three kinds of reverence to a fourth, viz., reverence for themselves. In the first place, the infant, with its hands clasped on its breast and eyes upturned to heaven, must learn reverence for that which is above us, for the Divine, which we must ever adore as the fountain of all good. Secondly, he has to learn, with his arms crossed on his back and with down-turned eyes, reverence for that which is under us. For the earth—Nature—albeit she affords us unspeakable pleasures, is nevertheless capable, if disregarded, of involving us, in an instant, in the most poignant and enduring sufferings. From this stage, the man passes, with his arms stretched out straight sideways, to reverence for his fellow, to associate himself with his comrade; for even the bravest cannot do much alone: he must join with his companions. These three kinds of reverence at last unite in reverence for ourselves, which is after all their source. This reverence, in which we become conscious of ourselves as the highest that God, Nature and History have been able to attain in the sphere of actuality, takes all darkness from us and fills us with the purest earnestness.

Every one is reared in accordance with his individuality in the pædagogic province, which is so arranged, that every one, although isolated for his peculiar activity, can easily pass to

other activities as soon as he is ripe for them. The order of Apprentice, Journeyman, and Master, is strictly observed. The arts are divided into strict and free, and the expression "handicraft" is set aside, because it has so often been connected with an unreasonable depreciation of the useful arts. The strictest of all the arts is architecture. In sculpture, painting, and music, a mistake is to be tolerated more readily: form, color, sound, do however make an impression. But mistakes must not be built. Theatrical art is not cultivated. It presupposes a mean, snobbish public. A crowd fond of sight-seeing, trying to get rid of *ennui*. But such a crowd has no existence whatever in Goethe's active and highly educated social world. Moreover, such an art is not without danger for the development of the character, inasmuch as it inevitably leads to the simulation of pain and pleasure. It is also particularly injurious to the other arts, which it uses to add to its own glitter, and misleads into false tendencies. Goethe compares it to a light-headed brother or sister, who wastes the property of the other brothers and sisters for the display of the moment. Should any one happen to show a decided talent for mimicry, manifesting itself at an early age in the imitation of other people, the heads of the pædagogic province would stand in connection with the directors of the theatre, and would send the pupil to them in order that, like a duck in a pond, he might devote himself to his life-waddle and life-quack. To music, on the other hand, and particularly to vocal music, he assigns a very high position, and considers it capable of exercising the happiest influence in imparting moral elevation to the emotional nature.

The Christian religion, in its general outlines, is the one supposed to prevail in this social world. At the same time there is the utmost freedom of worship, and the religious creed is accepted simply as an expression of the obligation of persons to belong to each other in life and in death. At the same time, Christianity is strongly emphasized. Jews are excluded from the social state; because, in his view, by adhering to an exclusive nationality, they do not recognize the principle of humanity. The Apostles' Creed is declared to be the most rational of all, inasmuch as it finds, more or less, an echo in every other creed. According to Goethe, the first article is ethni-

cal and belongs to all nations; the second, Christian, intended for those who combat with suffering, and through suffering are perfected; the third inculcates an enthusiastic communion of the saints, that is, of those who are supremely good and wise. The three divine persons, in whose likeness and name such convictions and promises are uttered, are therefore with propriety considered as the highest unit. Göthe develops the concept of religion in analogy with the system of the three kinds of reverence. The religion which worships the divine above us, he calls the *ethnical*, and includes within it, not only what are usually termed the Pagan religions, but also the Jewish religion. In opposition to these natural, child-like religions, he places the philosophic religion, which teaches men how to equalize themselves with the Universe, to seize everything foreign as if it were themselves, and which draws the higher down to them, and the lower up to them. According to Göthe, Christ in his life was a true philosopher, inasmuch as he annihilated the common by miracles, and by miracles brought the uncommon more within the reach of ordinary minds. By his death as a criminal, he became the Founder of the third religion—the Religion of Pain, which teaches us to embrace in the arms of love that which is under us—the low, the despised, the repulsive, the hostile, yea, even in sin and ignominy to behold not obstacles but advantages to our higher life. The only way, however, for man into this depth of pain is through the preparatory stages of those other religions. It is a piece of impudence, worthy of all reprobation, to profane the image of the Holy One in the act of dying out of love for love, by exposing it everywhere to vulgar gaze. In the temple of the pædagogic province, it is concealed in the shrine as the Holiest of Holies, rarely accessible, and only to the assembled congregation. Round it there runs a gallery with *symphronistic* companion-pictures taken from the ethnic religions, and representing the development of the same event in each; for example, the sacrifice of Iphigenia by Agamemnon, and of Isaac by Abraham. The true and *absolute* religion is the union of these three—the worship of the Higher, conciliation with the world, and the consecration of evil, pain, and sin. It is devotion, reason, and self-conquest, in living unity. Worship, as we have seen, is left entirely free. We

find, however, a peculiar Sunday-celebration. As the termination of the week, it is made to afford every person an opportunity of turning over an entirely new leaf, and of beginning a fresh week with gladness. In cases of doubt with regard to justice or public economy, direct recourse is to be had to the heads of the community. Economical questions have a deeper hold upon the moral life than might be at first supposed. Moral aberrations of a more delicate nature may be discussed by each individual with the person in whom he has most confidence. Only, every one must be made to consider it his duty to enter upon each new week with a cool, collected mind, a reinvigorated will, and an unburdened heart. The dull conscience must be excited, the excited conscience calmed down by force of reason.

All goods are to be considered as *possession* and *common property*. These two words are posted up and present themselves most frequently to the eye, in order forcibly to remind every one that he must have as if he had not; that he must consider all other persons as sharers in his property, and deal with his private property as if he were merely its manager. Goethe does not wish to see inequality of possession and enjoyment annihilated by any revolution like communism, but would have it removed by a change of feeling working from within outwards, and by a new mode of regarding the nature of property, viz., as possession and common property. With such a view, and with the Sunday's property-confession, which puts everything to rights in the practical life, it is taken for granted that there will be no lawsuits, and hence that a judicial bench will be unnecessary. Justice is maintained by the clearness of the practical reason, working itself out with unabating originality, from its abundant source. All difference in regard to the interpretation of the letter of the law disappears. On the other hand, great weight is laid upon an effective police-system, whose duty it is to remove all troublesome things and persons. It is backed up by the regulation that every one who has reached the years of discretion shall have the right at once to rebuke wrong, impropriety, and wickedness. The power of reprimanding and punishing, however, is to be invested in the Elders. Three police directors are to be on duty in every district, and to be changed every eight hours. Where they are unable to perform their duty successfully,



where the complication is too great, they have the right to call for a jury immediately to decide the case. The sale of spirituous liquors, which leads to so much strife and misery, is to be prohibited. Circulating libraries, likewise, which deprive reading (which is so powerful an agent in education) of its value, and offer so much of a premium for mediocre and common literature, are not permitted. Finally, there is no standing army, that being the source of such a host of immoralities, and being obliged, in times of peace, to occupy itself solely with vain and disgusting display on the parade; on the contrary, all must learn to fence, shoot, march, and manœuvre. Lothario is quite at home in this, and, in particular, exercises a kind of field-manœuvre.

There are no bells or drums. All signals are given by means of wind-instruments. A capital will probably be formed in this social world; indeed, one can see the point at which it might arise, but every effort will be made to retard, as long as possible, an institution which is so prejudicial to individuality. In this Goethe agrees entirely with modern socialism, which is strongly opposed to cities being too large or too small, the former on account of their corruption, the latter on account of their old-foginess.

Those persons who are temporarily compelled to abnegation or to travel, not as a consequence of moral collisions, may connect themselves with the universal league, which manages everything connected with emigration (which must be distinguished from travel)—a point on which Odoardo's speech expatiates with the utmost perspicuity. Emigration is considered unavoidable, when the competition between machinery and hand-labor brings about a dangerous crisis, and exhibits the difference between movable and landed property in the most glaring light. Of those who, sooner or later, will from increase of pressure have to make up their minds to emigrate, Goethe takes particular notice of the weavers and spinners. They are treated of in Leonardo's diary, where the business of weaving in its fullest extent, and the circum-spect activity of Susanna, the *καλή καὶ ἀγαθή*, are handled in charming detail. Those who cannot find Herrnhuth or America everywhere in themselves, who find America only in America, sing to us:

Keep not standing fixed and rooted,  
Briskly venture, briskly roam!

Head and hand, where'er thou foot it,  
 And stout heart are still at home;  
 In each land the sun does visit,  
 We are gay whate'er betide,  
 To give space for wandering is it  
 That the world was made so wide! \*

## PHILOSOPHEMES.

I. Philosophy is the search for a distinction which will hold. Before its analysis all other determinations fall away, one after another, as secondary and dependent, leaving only the distinction of individuality, which is THOUGHT or SELF-DISTINCTION. The distinction of *the self from the self* is the distinction of self-determination, and is therefore independent and ultimate because it is a whole in itself.

II. Certainty should be discriminated from Truth. We are immediately certain of sensuous things, and likewise of the Ego—but not of the Truth. The problem of the science called “Phenomenology of Spirit” is to pass from certainty to Truth. What I am certain of is the Immediate, but the True is the *Absolute Mediation*.

III. The introduction of Time into a Cosmogony destroys it. Thus the “Development Theory” is a running down with no winding up. The crudest misapprehension of a system of Pure Science is that which looks upon the final, concrete categories as chronologically later in realization than the abstract ones at the beginning. Such misapprehension always arrives at Pantheism, and sets up an abstract Universal in place of a concrete one.

IV. Dogmatic *vs.* Speculative Philosophy asks, What is essence, active or rigid? If the former, the system is *speculative*; if the latter, *dogmatic*.

V. Bravery is the ascent of the individual into the generic, so that the particular self is ignored. The possibility of suicide rests on the same basis. Hence it is a proof of immortality; for that the individual can consciously rise into the *genus* implies that there can be no death to it, since death occurs only when the individual cannot endure subsumption under the universal.

VI. The Negative, traced out, arrives at the negation of negation as the total. *Proof*: The Negative is in opposition or relation—it is *the negative of somewhat*; hence the somewhat is also in opposition (or negative) to somewhat else (the Negative of it); hence the Negative was, in the first place, only

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\* Carlyle's translation.